

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EB-07 ISO-00 /018 W
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R 241000Z DEC 75
FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
TO USDOC WASHDC
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 3946

UNCLAS COLOMBO 4084

EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: BEXP, CE
SUBJ: SOUTH ASIA COMMERCIAL OFFICERS CONFERENCE IN COLOMBO

REF: STATE 294792

1. BASED ON REF WE HAVE RECHECKED CAREFULLY
WITH LANKA OBEROI. THEY CONFIRM THAT BASIC
SINGLE ROOM RATE WILL BE US \$14.50 PLUS 10 PERCENT
SERVICE CHARGE AND PRESENT 10 PERCENT GOVT TAX MAKING
THE TOTAL SINGLE COST US \$17.30. (GOVT TAX
GOES TO 20 PERCENT ON JAN 1 BUT OBEROI WOULD USE
10 PERCENT IF RESERVATIONS MADE FIRMLY BEFORE JAN 1).
LANKA OBEROI BASIC DOUBLE RATE WOULD BE US \$18
PER DAY (US \$21.62). LANKA OBEROI WILL NOT MAKE
SAME CONFERENCE SPACE AVAILABLE FREE REPEAT FREE
0800 HRS THROUGH 1900 HRS. ALL THREE DAYS APRIL 6
TO 8 AGAINST GUARANTEED OCCUPANCY OF 15 ROOMS. TEA,
COFFEE AND REFRESHMENT EXTRA. EMBASSY COULD PROVIDE
PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM.

2. INTER-CONTINENTAL HOTEL IS AWARE OF WASHINGTON OFFICE
INQUIRY. FOR 15 ROOMS OR MORE THEY QUOTE SINGLE AT
RS 179 PLUS SERVICE CHARGE AND TAX WOULD BE RS 214.80
OR ABOUT US \$21.00. FOR THEIR QUOTATION THEY MAKE
RUPEE/DOLLAR CONVERSION AT STANDARD PREMIUM RATE
RS 10 TO US \$1. BASIC DOUBLE RATE FSS RS 226 PLUS
SERVICE CHARGE AND TAX MAKING RS 271.20 OR ABOUT US \$28.
EXCHANGE RATE INFO IN PARA 2B REF TEL IS CONFUSED. SRI
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LANKA HAS PREMIUM RATE CALLED FEEC (FOREIGN EXCHANGE

ENTITLEMENT CERTIFICATE) RATE TO WHICH ALL VISITORS ENTITLED. OFFICIAL RATE IS USED FOR OTHER TRADE AND FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS. CURRENTLY THESE RATES ARE: FEEC: US \$1 EQUALS RS 12.66 AND OFFICIAL RATE US \$1 EQUALS RS 7.62. ALL CONFERENCE ATTENDEES VISITING SRILANKA WOULD BE ENTITLED TO PREMIUM FEEC RATE AND ALL CONVERSIONS OF HOTEL COSTS, OTHER CHARGES AND LOCAL PRICES SHOULD BE MADE AT THAT PREMIUM RATE. UPON CHECKING INQUIRY FROM WASHINGTON, CEYLON INTER-CONTINENTAL DOES OFFER FREE CONFERENCE ROOM. HOWEVER, WE HAVE HAD CONFERENCE IN ROOM OFFERED AND DO NOT BELIEVE IT SATISFACTORY.

3. CONCERNING PARA 2C REF WE CONSIDERED PEGASUS REEF, BUT THIS BEACH RESORT HOTEL IS ABOUT 10 MILES AWAY FROM COLOMBO TOWARDS AIRPORT. IT COULD BE ATTRACTIVE SITE FOR CONFERENCE BUT TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM COLOMBO WOULD BE COMPLICATED AND COSTLY. IF COMMERCE AND STATE, HOWEVER THINK IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE TO DOWN-TOWN COLOMBO HOTELS, LOGISTICS AND TRANSPORT COULD BE WORKED OUT BUT WOULD REQUIRE ADDITIONAL FUNDING.

4. ECON/COMM OFFICER HAWLEY HAS ATTENDED ONE COMMERCIAL CONFERENCE (TEHRAN JUNE 1974) AND BELIEVES LANKA OBEROI WOULD BE BEST CONFERENCE SITE AND SO RECOMMENDS.

5. REF PARA 4 LOUT CLEARED FSL SECRETARY AVAILABLE.

6. REF PARA 5 WE WILL HAVE SMALL RECEPTION ON APRIL 5. EMBASSY WOULD ALSO PLAN OTHER SOCIAL FUNCTIONS AND ENTERTAINMENT. ALTERNATIVES WILL BE SENT TO STATE AND COMMERCE WHEN CONFERENCE PLAN FIRMER.

7. REF PARA 6, COLOMBO PLAN IS ONLY RESIDENT MULT-LATERAL ECONOMIC ORGANIZATION IN COLOMBO. AS THIS POINT WE DO NOT KNOW OF GOOD SPEAKERS APPROPRIATE FOR CONFERENCE AND AVAILABLE, APRIL 6 - 8. WOULD SENIOR GSL OFFICER BE ACCEPTABLE? OTHERWISE, AT THIS POINT WE SUGGEST THAT SOUTH ASIA CONFERENCE INVITEES BE UNCLASSIFIED

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ASKED FOR SUGGESTIONS.

8. WE HAVE MADE TENTATIVE BOOKING 25 SINGLES AND CONFERENCE SPACE AT LANKA OBEROI. PLEASE CONFIRM STATE/COMMERCE APPROVAL SOONEST. WE PRESUME SOME INVITEES WILL BRING WIVES, POSSIBLY CHILDREN AND SOME MAY PREFER ANOTHER HOTEL. IN INVITATION CABLE, PLEASE ASK THEM TO GIVE US THEIR

PLANS EARLY, SAY NO LATER THAN FEB 20.
VAN HOLLEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 DEC 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975COLOMB04084
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750446-1102
From: COLOMBO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751212/aaaaakjh.tel
Line Count: 117
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 294792
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 11 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <11 JUN 2003 by ReddocGW>; APPROVED <06 FEB 2004 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOUTH ASIA COMMERCIAL OFFICERS CONFERENCE IN COLOMBO
TAGS: BEXP, CE
To: COM
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006